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NATIONAL Public Relations

Robin Kerbel

Edward Gould, Managing Partner of NATIONAL Public Relations Toronto, is pleased to announce the appointment of Robin Kerbel to the position of Vice President and co-director of the firm's healthcare practice, NATIONAL PharmaCom.

Ms. Kerbel brings more than 18 years' experience in the pharmaceutical and healthcare field. She specializes in product launches, health promotion and health education programs for physicians, pharmacists and patients. Her expertise also includes issues and crisis management and corporate image campaigns.

In her role at NATIONAL, Robin will play an instrumental role in expanding the firm's already impressive Canadian and international pharmaceutical and healthcare clientele.

NATIONAL PharmaCom is Canada's leading medical communications consulting firm, specializing in public relations, continuing health education, government relations and clinical trial recruitment. Offices are located in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Calgary, Vancouver, Quebec City and New York.

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Jitec stock sold at discounts: suit

Company's CEO, brokers allegedly boosted shares by selling them at prices undeclared on the open market

BY BERTRAND MAROTTE, MONTREAL

Former **Jitec Inc.** chief executive officer Benoît Laliberté and two Montreal stockbrokers artificially supported the value of Jitec shares by selling stock to investors at discount prices that were not declared in the open market, according to allegations contained in a revised class-action suit.

The suit, filed in Quebec Superior Court yesterday, alleges that Mr. Laliberté, as well as Martin Gendron and Ali Bassari of Leduc & Associates Securities, wooed shareholders last year by offering them, at no cost, shares representing an extra 25 per cent of the total value of the Jitec stock they bought.

For example, someone buying 100 shares at the $10 market value would get an extra 25 shares in a private side transaction that was not declared, according to the allegations.

The result was that the value of Jitec shares was artificially supported, according to the court document.

The suit, an amended version of one filed last November, alleges that Mr. Laliberté and the two brokers met with investors in Drummondville, Que., last October and invited them to open an account at Leduc in order to buy Jitec shares on the stock market.

"In return for [the] purchases each investor would receive the equivalent of 25 per cent of his/her investment in shares of Jitec, at no cost," says the statement of claim.

The document also alleges that, in September and October, shareholders who had previously bought Jitec shares were offered more shares at discounts of between 25 and 32 per cent, at a nominal cost of a penny a share.

The suit goes on to allege: "By permitting Laliberté to offer Leduc's clients free or almost free shares of Jitec, knowing said transfers would not be made through the stock market, Leduc, acting through Gendron and Bassari, aided Laliberté in his goal to maintain the price of the Jitec shares."

Mr. Laliberté's spokesman, Daniel Larouche, said yesterday he could not comment on the allegations and they would be addressed in a forthcoming statement of defence.

The allegations are in a revised petition for a class-action suit that contains the addition of Gérald Léveillé — a Drummondville businessman — to the list of petitioners.

The original suit alleges that Mr. Laliberté artificially boosted stock in Jitec — a Montreal-area high-tech startup — by trading heavily in the shares through various brokerage accounts.

It also alleges that Jitec issued misleading press releases to support the stock price — which soared to the $10 level after the initial public offering at $3.80 last July — and "grossly overstated" both the potential of its technology and its financial projections.

The company leases and sells no-frills computer terminals that provide high-speed Internet access and other advanced features to customers.

Yesterday, new management at Jitec said a previously announced agreement to supply 45,000 hotel-room terminals for $105-million to Vancouver-based Canada Payphone Corp. has "failed to generate any orders."

Jitec did not provide further details.

Mr. Laliberté and companies related to him severed all ties with Jitec last year after reports surfaced of allegedly unauthorized transactions.

A Quebec Securities Commission investigation into unusual trading patterns in Jitec shares last year continues, and the stock — halted March 15 — has yet to resume trading on the Montreal Exchange.

No charges have been laid and no allegations have been proven in court.

Also yesterday, Jitec said it has reached a definitive settlement with Mr. Laliberté and his companies for the repayment of about $485,000 over a two-year period.

Mr. Laliberté has also agreed to issue to Jitec a debenture worth $550,000, convertible into common shares of a holding company recently created by him.

As well, the holding company has agreed to take over various legal proceedings against Jitec under which an aggregate sum of about $270,000 is claimed from Jitec.

Mr. Laliberté remains a major Jitec shareholder.

ANDRE PICHETTE/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Jitec says it has reached a definitive settlement with former CEO Benoit Laliberté and his companies for the repayment of about $485,000.

Molson, Labatt bag top honours at TV advertising awards

BY JOHN HEINZL

Canada's big breweries were the toast of yesterday's Bessies Awards in Toronto honouring the best television commercials in Canada.

Molson Canada's The Rant added to its already impressive trophy collection by taking the Best of Show award in the single commercial category. The Rant, created by Bensimon Byrne D'Arcy in Toronto, also won in the best writing and best actor categories.

Arch-rival **Labatt Brewing Co. Ltd.** won Best of Show campaign honours for its humorous Bud Light ads featuring Vikings, an attic launcher and a 24-hour figure skating channel — all ploys to give guys more time with their pals. The campaign was created by Palmer Jarvis DDB's Toronto office.

Toronto-based Ammirati Puris's 4½-minute ad relaunching Eaton's won for art direction, cinematography, direction and editing.

Other winners included: a Breast Cancer Society of Canada ad, created by Zig of Toronto, featuring a hormone-charged teenager named Cam; a Clorox Co. of Canada spot titled Dog Tired and created by Palmer Jarvis in Toronto; and an ad for the Vancouver International Film Festival called German Subtitles, created by Vancouver's Bryant Fulton & Shee.

Founded in 1963, the Bessies are organized by the Television Bureau of Canada in conjunction with the Broadcast Executives Society.

In other awards show news, BBDO Canada of Toronto won a gold at the Clio awards in New York for a print ad for Jeep, which depicted a stop sign jutting out horizontally from the face of a cliff. Other ads in the Jeep campaign won silver and bronze.

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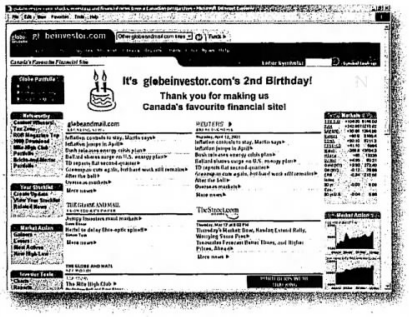

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